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# Antoinette

A Wreath of Autumn Leaves



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## ANTOINETTE.

### I

I read it from the sage's pen,  
It is the poet's wonted theme,  
That men are but the forms of men  
That move within a world of dream.

Sorrow a dream, a dream the strife  
Of soul, the high aspiring zeal;  
Fate smites her adamant wheel  
To lightning, and we name it life.

The soul of man, a sentient clod,  
A wandering voice upon the shore,  
That from the darkness unto God  
Cries through the ages evermore.

What seems a part, O Lord, of Thee,  
Is but a flame, a smoking brand  
Swung to and fro within the hand  
Of blind, relentless destiny.

I see the evening sunlight fall,  
I list the evening breezes play,  
And through yon dim aerial hall  
I see the cloud-wheels roll away.

A moment from the voiceless deep,  
Shadows of mist that only seem,  
We watch the towers of Heaven gleam,  
Then, silence and eternal sleep.

## II

The bards of eld have told it me,  
So say a hundred sages now,  
Each with a light upon his brow  
That tells of immortality.

Fire mixed with clay is in the mould.  
Into the nothing if I must,  
But let me die with them that hold  
The fire diviner than the dust.

Not downward run, O Death, to thee,  
With glimmering stream, the tides of time,  
Nor reach in some mysterious clime  
The stillness of Oblivion's sea.

But upward, onward, heaves the wave,  
Bright circling till the farther zone  
Of waters doth in music lave  
The skirting of the Great White Throne.

## III

We walked alone ; the autumn breeze  
Made music in the forest old,  
While spread the lordly maple trees  
Beneath our feet a floor of gold.

And how we talked, dear Antoinette,  
Of finished dream and hope begun!  
The glory of that autumn sun  
Within my soul is shining yet.

It was a calm, a holy hour ;—  
Thou spak'st of Andrew and thy love ;—  
Down from her high encrimsoned bower  
Did float the mourning of the dove.

The parting hand we took and gave,  
Life's holy call we understood;  
And there within the silent wood  
We laid our childhood in the grave.

Years fled apace, our toil increased,  
Each fain would choose a place of rest;  
Mine eyes beheld the storied East  
And thine the glory of the West.

Hyperion did flash for me  
A beacon to the gates of morn;  
To West, for thee, fair Cynthia's horn  
Poured golden fire upon the sea.

As unto Him it seemeth good,  
The roaring waves around thee cease;  
I still am toiling with the flood  
And thou hast entered into peace.

A vision from that radiant shore  
Bends o'er me now; thy sainted face,  
Thy beauty and thy tender grace  
Abide within me evermore.

Full oft I watch thy sail afar  
In the deep blue of ether gleam;  
Thy ship a cloud, thy soul a star,  
So thou returnest in my dream.

And sweet the hope I cherish yet,  
I sailing East, thee sailing West,  
In yon far Islands of the Blest,  
Shall meet again, dear Antoinette.

#### IV

Once more, as in the far-off days,  
I hear the wood-dove murmur sweet;  
I sit within the lone retreat,  
Or walk the old frequented ways.

What golden hour hath ever passed  
But left its haunting, fond regret?  
Too sweet, too full of joy to last,  
Too full of sorrow to forget.

To voice of bird my bosom thrills;  
Fair are the fields as fair they seemed  
When children here we sat and dreamed  
Of the great world beyond the hills.

One lofty hope, one sacred fire,  
Burned in us twain; of purpose true,  
Each heart did evermore aspire  
To something higher than it knew.

Still do my feet, as erst they trod,  
Through the long darkness weary climb;  
Thou, strong in faith, of hope sublime,  
Didst leap as lightning unto God.

Dead are the fires, or dimly burn,  
And trails the wing that Fancy gave;  
E'en Hope herself, if Hope return,  
Comes like a phantom from the grave.

O the dead past, the wealth of tears!  
Beholdest thou the written page?  
And shall I bring thee in mine age  
The fruitage of the wasted years?



Ask me not now the golden sheaves;  
As one that gleaneth out of time,  
I gather up the scattered leaves  
And weave for thee a wreath of rhyme.

Thy sainted name I call aloud  
Till all the listening hills rejoice;  
And Echo, daughter of a voice,  
Falls like an anthem from the cloud.

My lips are purer naming thee,  
And song is healer to my heart;  
O might the song immortal be  
As thou thyself immortal art!

## V

Sweet spirit, touch me with thy breath.  
O let me sing, or dream I sing,  
One glorious song ere I do wing  
O'er that lone river sounding death.

I touch the ladder wrought of rhyme,  
I grasp it, stumbling in the night;  
Lend me thy harp, and I will climb  
From this dread silence into light.

I spake, and heard the spirit say:  
"O thou, that dost a shadow sit,  
Faint echo of the Infinite,  
How shall I say thee yea, or nay?

"Why art thou come, a pilgrim old,  
A wanderer from the ways of Truth;  
Why askest now, thy story told,  
The music and the fire of youth?

“From springs within her sacred vale,  
Life filled for thee a cup divine,  
And thou hast poured it out like wine  
Upon the altars of thy Baal.

“Thy wayward verse no joy shall bring,  
A fitting leaf in darkness blown ;  
Thy Psalm of Life I bid thee sing,  
But sing it to thyself alone.

“Or, if thy heart to numbers wed  
Still yearns for what the world denies,  
The dead behold with kindly eyes ;—  
Go harp thy music to the dead.

“Stay thou, or bid more quickly pass,  
The shadow slanting at the door ;  
Join bit by bit the shattered glass,  
Shall the clear image shine once more?

“Thou hadst a voice with power to draw  
And fire the slumbering hearts of men ;  
For that sweet lyre I gave thee then,  
Behold a scrannel-pipe of straw.

“And mourn thou not, but humbly trust,  
If thy fair temple ere thou build,  
Thy hand shall crumble into dust  
And leave thy purpose unfulfilled.

“Salute thy muse ; she lifteth high  
A withered hand presaging doom,  
A sibyl raving in the gloom ;—  
Now take thy harp and prophesy.”

## VI

Then came the voice and milder came:  
"Weave, weave thy song; now, ere the gloom  
Of night enfold thee, web and loom;  
Make new thy robe and hide thy shame.

"Sing quickly, ere thy harp be rust,  
Once mute, and mute forevermore;  
What carest thou, thy body dust,  
Whether the dull world laugh or snore?

"The world heeds not, and should not heed,  
Mayhap; thou thinkest not aright;  
Even a broken lyre hath might  
To save thy soul,—this be thy meed.

"Sing blithe, for once the banquet o'er,  
Thy windows dark, stranger or kin,  
Ah, who shall ask at curtained door  
For the lone harper dead within?

"Go weave thy songs, take heart of grace;  
The withered leaves upon thy brow,  
Thy Lord will bless, beholding how,  
Though late, thou strivest in the race.

"Sing clear, albeit the jostling throng  
Pause not to hear. From thy deep Hell  
Set free, the magic wing of song  
Shall waft thee where archangels dwell.

"Go count the gain and count the loss,  
Then take thy heavy burden up;  
The wine is bitter in the cup,  
No crown, mayhap, but take the Cross."

## VII

The cypress I, and thou the pine,  
Neighbor, I bend and touch thee,—so;  
Now, let me tell thee all my woe,  
And I will listen unto thine.

For silence is the food of grief,  
And none would bear his grief alone;  
Each mourner fain would find relief  
In finding sorrow like his own.

While thus I beat the little drum  
Of self, lamenting in the night,  
A voice that seemed a shaft of light,  
Fell on my soul and smote me dumb:

“Thy sorrow is the summer snow;  
The little vintage of thy tears  
Is but the aftermath of woe  
To the great harvest of the years.

“The little, little god of pelf  
Hath sent his prophet unto thee;  
The Lord of Life thou canst not see  
For that high altar unto self.

“With glint of gold thine eyes are dim,  
Dim with the tinsel and the dross;  
Between thy doubting soul and Him,  
Lo, the dread shadow of the Cross!

“Thy heart, a pearl within must lie,  
Else vain thy cup of bitter wine;—  
'Tis sacrifice that makes divine,  
The fool drinks hemlock but to die.”

## VIII

My weary eyes for weeping fail,  
Beholding not the world's desire;  
How blithe soe'er I touch the lyre,  
Its music trembles into wail.

The prophets come, the prophets go,  
As lightning gleam their winged feet,  
And knowledge runneth to and fro  
And wisdom crieth in the street.

And yet, alas! howe'er we crown  
The kingly soul that goeth up,  
We still do quaff th' enchantress' cup  
And serve the beast that goeth down.

"We faint, we starve, O Christ, we die!"  
From 'neath the city's granite floor,  
That voice of wail, that bitter cry,  
Rings in our ears forevermore.

'Tis ours to loose the galling band;  
We are the law, we are the state;—  
Alas, the iron hand of Fate  
Is oft a Christian brother's hand.

With Gospel-preparation shod  
We tread the winepress for the gain,  
And naming it the wrath of God,  
Despise the soul that we have slain.

Her robe defiled, her banner torn,  
Within her broken temple-gate  
Fair Freedom sitteth desolate,—  
The sons of Freedom are forsworn.

The bride of Christ is captive led,  
In golden chain she maketh moan,  
Her children's blood is dripping red  
From teeth of dragons she hath sown.

We boast of power, an arm unseen,  
We speak, and lo! the mountains nod;  
We are the mighty hand of God;  
Shall not the hand of God be clean?

We garner souls, our golden sheaves,  
Yet hoarding still the earthly dross,  
More reverence pay the living thieves  
Than the dead Christ upon the cross.

O Christian, wake! be bold and free!  
To thee the world unceasing cries;  
The world she hath a thousand eyes,  
And all her eyes are set on thee.

Go draw from deeper, sweeter wells,  
Go bid thy selfishness depart;  
Cast out the hypocrite that dwells  
In the Shekinah of thy heart.

The temple veil go rend in twain,  
Lay bare the harlotry within;  
Go smite the cheek of mitred sin  
That of pollution maketh gain.

Let thine own life be pure and whole;  
O'er outward foe would'st thou prevail,  
Go slay the priests within thy soul  
That keep the altar-fires of Baal.

Wash thee, then gird thy sword again,  
Fear not the tumult and the roar;  
Truth smiting error, evermore  
Makes dreadful lightning unto men.

Thou art the promise—prove thy worth—  
Of that great world that is to be,  
Behold the Lord of all the earth  
Doth stand and wait on thee, on thee.

## IX

To him who well his part hath borne,  
Whose age a dauntless spirit cheers,  
The shadow of a hundred years  
Is but the twilight unto morn.

The guerdon of immortal youth  
If thou would'st win be bold, be bold;  
Who fight for Freedom and for Truth,  
They do not die, they grow not old.

Still sendeth God his men of might,  
Still to and fro his heralds fly,  
Still round the world his prophets cry,  
And speak the darkness into light.

Though Sin doth breed upon the land,  
Though hearts be faint and vision fail,  
There still is left a stalwart band  
That have not bent the knee to Baal.

Of all the grand and shining train,  
Thee, thee we love and honor most;  
In thee we joy, of thee we boast,  
O thou imperial son of Maine!

Thy dauntless soul did mount alone  
And shine above the wavering crowd,  
As o'er the sons of Israel shone  
The Fiery Pillar and the Cloud.

Thy years of toil and ceaseless strife  
Have taught the laggard world anew  
What one brave heart can dare and do;  
Thou shamest us to nobler life.

A chief art thou, a leader born,  
Thy tongue a sword, a sword thy pen,  
That flash the lightning of thy scorn,  
A terror unto evil men.

We meet to-night, our hearts are glad,  
We joy in thee and thy renown;  
Thou wearest now the snowy crown  
Of many a brave Olympiad.

The Lord anoints thee Prince of Men,  
And, seeing thee, we worship him;  
At morn we gird the sword again  
And march against the Anakim.

## X

Through waveless calm of summer seas,  
Past flowery islands fringed with palm  
And odorous trees distilling balm,  
We seek the famed Hesperides.

Not so, not so, forevermore  
'Tis toil alone that giveth rest;  
Through crash of ocean and its roar,  
We gain the Islands of the Blest.



Awake, O youth, what seems afar  
The sound of dreamland music sweet,  
Is but the clangor of the street  
Or cymbals clashing unto war.

The present hour is evermore  
An earnest of the great to be;  
'Tis here we seek the mystic lore  
That lights us through eternity.

With many a tower and many a dome,  
In every heart is builded fair  
A thing of fire, a thing of air,  
The likeness of the spirit's home.

We rise from out the great unknown  
At stroke of the enchanter's rod,  
Wierd spirits mailed in flesh and bone  
That wore through darkness up to God.

With roar of wheels and ceaseless hum,  
We move in power, a thing of dread,  
A voice between the voiceless dead  
And voiceless living yet to come.

## XI

How passing fair the days of old,  
The glory of our golden prime!  
Our hearts were light, our spirits bold,  
In music ran the sands of Time.

We trode upon enchanted ground;  
Young Love awoke, to purple morn  
He winded clear his elfin horn;  
Nor deemed we then so sweet a sound

Might echo down the vale of years  
And for the laughter and the smiles  
Claim bitter recompense of tears.  
Alas, the time! alas, the wiles!

O friends, the golden cycle run,  
Through that dread wall without a door,  
Each passing to return no more,  
How have ye vanished one by one!

Still, like the tide upon the sands,  
The little people, wave on wave;  
I feel the might of tiny hands  
That push me to the open grave.

I murmur not, I count it gain;  
Love holds with youth eternal tryst;  
Though I do pass within the mist,  
The dreamer and the dream remain.

## XII

My love stood at the gates of Morn,  
Like one that smiles but inly grieves,  
I saw her gather scattered leaves  
As from the book of Sibyl torn.

“O Love,” I cried, “the wine, red wine  
Of Life runs free;—behold, I quaff!  
Touch with thy lips and make divine,—  
With thee I share it, half and half.

“Two lives in one, a perfect whole;  
On the fair stream no shadow lies.  
I look for truth within thine eyes  
And see the image of my soul.

“Without thy hand in vain I trim  
The sail, the auguries are vain;  
For one alone the sky is dim,  
I cast the horoscope for twain.

“Toward one bright cloud—I mark the sign—  
Two eagles soar in yonder blue;  
Of my own life a prophet true,  
Fain would I prophet be of thine.

“I see a youth beside thee stand;  
He speaks thee fair, he loves thee well;  
The marriage ring is on thy hand,  
I hear the sound of marriage bell”.

Quoth she: “Within the ring I trace  
The path of years,—thy love is cold;  
My heart is young, my face is old,  
And thou beholdest but the face”.

I said: “O love, thy words deny,  
I cleave to thee whate’er betide;  
The flower of youth may fade and die,  
My love shall evermore abide”.

And she: “Thou sayest our hearts are kin;  
Speech standeth in the door of thought  
And makes it dark; thy words are naught,  
I fain would see the soul within”.

“O love,” I cried, “enthralled yet free,  
My heart, thy heart, the secret knows;  
What need of words to thee and me  
Who speak the language of the rose?”

Sweet marriage bells, and smiles and tears,  
And clasped hands, and love's desire,  
And then, ah then, a paling fire  
Slow glimmering in the mist of years.

Not eagle soaring to his rest,  
Nor the low mourning of the dove,  
Soft wooing to her leafy nest,  
The symbol and the type of love.

O life, O love, how fair ye seem,  
Transfigured in the fire of truth!  
No more in fantasies of youth,  
I seek fulfillment of my dream.

My heart hath purer fire within,  
And hers hath learned a sweeter trust;  
We dwell beside the tents of Sin,  
Yet build no altar unto lust.

I look not on the things of men,  
The days have brought me goodly store;  
I count the gain and evermore  
The now seems better than the then.

Though light of that first Eden fail,  
Around me fairer Eden lies.  
The shrine of self is in the vale,—  
I climb the mount of sacrifice.

One voice, one hand, my journey speeds  
To view the richer, broader land;  
We climb, and climb, 'tis not her hand  
That trembles, nay, nor mine that leads.

### XIII

A river rolling in the wood,  
A murmuring spring, a leafy tent,  
A poet making low lament  
Unto the fountain and the flood:

O for the song! my harp is true,  
My heart is unto music wed;  
I fain would sing the old, the new,  
But, woe is me! the Muse is dead.

She died with old Maeonides,  
She died in Sappho's golden isle;  
She died beneath the glorious smile  
Of Athens, chanting trilogies.

Her Pindar dead, a mourning ran  
In music round the Hill of Mars;  
For one great bard, Sicilian Pan  
Did pipe his sorrow to the stars.

She sleeps with Maro by the steep  
Where mountain murmurs to the wave,  
She sleeps with Horace in the cave  
Of Tybur, an eternal sleep.

One cypress wreath did round her own  
And Tasso's forehead twining run.  
Not into Heaven passed alone,  
O Florence, thine immortal son.

Her garment glimmered in the dawn,  
As at the morn, all richly dight,  
A ladie fair, a goodlie knight,  
Rode through the vale of Avalon.

With words of fate that burned as fire,  
She talked with Omar in the tent;  
Till with him vanished Muse and lyre  
Into the voiceless firmament.

“Ah, woe is me!” the poet said;  
“I tune my harp, I touch the string;  
The world it waits to hear me sing,  
But woe is me! the Muse is dead.”

A faerie queen and lover meet;  
With warbled speech they onward go,  
As brooklets twain, whose waters sweet  
In ever tinkling music flow.

Men say the world in scorn she quit;—  
A star the Muse, the bard a sun,  
She wanders with the mighty one  
Of Avon through the Infinite.

With fair Urania one did move,  
In scorn of Fate, to high renown.  
Hers was a more than mortal love  
And his a more than mortal crown.

Upon her arm, with failing breath,  
Her sightless Sampson weary leant,  
As from the world they silent went  
Through awful darkness unto death.

O blithe the pipe and silvan horn  
By river-side and mountain glen!  
The mavis sang to purple morn  
That the old gods were come again.

Men saw the Muse with Goethe rise,  
A lightning flash, a flying throne;—  
The Land of Rhine a moment shone  
As shine the fields of Paradise.

For children twain her heart is sad;  
The bard of St. Cecilia's day  
And him that sang the Dunciad,  
Mourning she crowned, and passed away.

"Ah, woe is me!" the poet said;  
"I pledge to Love my vows renew;  
I fain would sing of Freedom, too,  
But woe is me! the Muse is dead."

Her lyre became a Northern Light  
And hinted immortality;  
The shadow of the Infinite  
Did waver on the land and sea.

Childe Harold came, a pilgrim late,  
Sad exile from the court of Jove;  
He came in splendor, lord of love,  
He went in darkness, lord of hate.

O Muse that leadest Shelley home,  
Turn thou no more thine envious eyes  
Where, 'neath the marble walls of Rome,  
The lordly Adonais lies.

Ere shades of night the waters blur,  
For thy Endymion and thee  
The boundless marble of the sea  
Shall be a kinglier sepulchre.

In tattered robe a minstrel sat,  
And wept, and wept; in anguish sharp,  
“The man’s a man for a’ that”,  
He cried, and broke a nation’s harp.

Thy heart, fair Muse, is cleft in twain,  
And half is with Aurora Leigh;  
Sordello, mourning her and thee,  
Kept half, nepenthe to his pain.

Thy daughter sleeps on Tuscan plain,  
Watched o’er by Alp and Apennine;  
Thy son, in London’s storied fane,  
With England’s mightiest and thine.

Once more the lamps are burning dim;  
In yonder lonely isle of Wight,  
Her love is dying in the night,  
And she is dying, too, with him.

Like Merlin did the wizard pass;  
Through window in the Muse’s grot,  
He showed as in a magic glass  
How fair the towers of Camelot.

Uncouth of speech, unskilled of pen,  
The fair young West sat lone and mute,  
Three prophets came with harp and lute,  
And voiced her music unto men.

Each at the forge of fancy wrought,  
Their anvils rang a chorus true;  
Wide o’er the land the fire of thought  
In sparks from golden hammers flew.



And one I saw with laurel crown;  
Amid the roaring and the strife,  
I heard him chant a Psalm of Life,  
I saw the people bowing down.

Beside his grave, the Muse alone  
Wept not though all the land did weep;  
Beneath one low memorial stone  
Sibyl and son of Sibyl sleep.

And one he piped a woodland note,  
A quiet man, the neighbors said;  
The day the Muse and he were wed  
He wore a simple Quaker coat.

By winding paths of joy and grief  
She led him to the house of Fame;  
At last, upon her fair Greenleaf  
She, dying, wrote a deathless name.

And one his scorn of evil hurled  
In language quaint and quainter jest;  
Yet, Prophet Hosea, in thy breast  
There beat the heart of half the world.

Dead lay the maid of music born,  
A rose within thy confined hand;—  
For spirits twain the Gates of Horn  
Rolled inward to the Silent Land.

Sweet trinity of song, sweet lyre!  
They sang, and passing to their rest,  
Each left an echo in the West,  
The hope of them that do aspire.

And one there was did write his name,  
Like Sibyl, on the leaves of grass,  
And none might read, till glorious Fame  
Touched it with fire of chrysoprase.

Loved of the storm, and wind-caressed,  
So went he forth; we saw him stand  
On the high places of the land,  
The great behemoth of the West.

He lives an echo in the rock,  
A dweller in the tents of Pan;  
His soul is in the earthquake shock,  
In tempest, and the heart of man.

And other mighty bards there be  
Perchance, invisible, alone,  
Each sitting on a crystal throne,  
Like the great gods we cannot see.

And some there be that woo her smile,  
Like far-off dwellers of the sea,  
Each harping in his lonely isle,  
With none to hear his minstrelsy.

But what doth more my sorrow move,  
Unnamed among the nameless host,  
There be that love and love her most  
Yet have no language for their love.

#### XIV

O for a harp whose thrilling tones  
Might syllable the burning thought,  
That e'en the discord of our groans  
Might be a deathless music wrought!

I hear the rush of eagle's wing,  
I hear the far-off bittern's drum,  
And now the city's roar and hum  
And now a faint æolian string.

Earth cries aloud, "Abide, abide!"  
And still the ships flit o'er the sea;  
And the dread voice within the tide  
Sounds requiem and prophecy.

I hear the music in the shell;  
But do I hear it as it blew  
From Ocean's lips? Or false, or true,  
Do I repeat it? Who shall tell?

I cannot see my way aright,—  
I stumble on, nor mark the goal;  
My light, mayhap, a borrowed light,  
My soul, the shadow of a soul.

Howe'er my verse in splendor glow,  
Within the fiery forge of thought,  
The cooling chain with labor wrought,  
Rings iron to the hammer's blow.

And yet methinks within the lyre,  
Sweet cords unsmitten still remain,  
That wait some wizard's touch to fire  
Anew the grand, immortal strain.

His song shall make my lisping dumb;  
Content am I; nay more, elate,  
If I but fiddle while I wait  
Till that great lord of music come.

## XV

Once more beside the sea! my lips  
Are wet with brine, old Ocean smiles;  
Once more I watch the speeding ships  
Between the city and the isles.

No myth, no dream, the gods of Greece;  
I touch the shell that Triton blew;  
To the dim East I sail anew  
With Argo for the Golden Fleece.

I hear the murmur of the throng  
In the blue hills of Ocean hid;  
I hear the harping and the song  
Of many a far off Hesperid.

On river marge, by cliff and cave,  
The pipes of Pan; bright as of old,  
Sits Hesper in her tower of gold,  
Her lantern flashes to the wave.

Within my heart forevermore  
Doth echo sweet, Apollo's lute.  
Greece hath her sleep,—her magic lore  
Enthralls me though her lips are mute.

Here, where the azure wide unfurled  
Trails till the stars and ocean meet,  
And the blue sea-dogs run to greet  
Their mistress roaming round the world,

To roar of breakers and the roll  
Of Triton sounding to the dome,  
I build an Ilium in my soul  
Out of the sea-mist and the foam.

## XVI

Give me, with Omar, in the calm,  
Between the city and the sea,  
A harp and the o'ershadowing palm,  
And minstrels piping Pehlevi.

Ho, for the East, the caravan!  
A tent by night, a steed by day;—  
Away, o'er the wide waste, away  
To the high towers of Kublai Khan!

Or let me rest in spirit free  
Where that fair, fabled, Indian dove,  
Beneath the sorrow-ending tree  
Asoka, mourned her vanished love.

There let me dream until the blue  
Rivers have rolled away in tears,  
After a thousand, thousand years,  
To wake again,—the world made new.

Give me the onward march of man,  
The tumult and the shrilling tone  
Of bugle to the pipes of Pan  
At river-mouth and harbor blown.

Give me the oak, the mountain pine,  
The seed of empire in the breast,  
And that great wonder moving west,  
The glory of the Saxon line.

Give me to mark the far off goal  
Grow clearer as the cycle wanes;  
Give me the upward striving soul,—  
Be lord who will of what remains.

And may the giver, crowning bliss,  
How wide so'er my Eden lie,  
Sweet hope's fulfilment, grant that I,  
In the new home, remember this.

## XVII

O Night, sweet Night, that dost outpour  
A sea of darkness on my soul,  
And fill the sea with stars, bend o'er  
Me sleeping and my heart control.

I take thy hand, O Night, thy breath  
Is winged with sleep; here let me lie  
In the sweet dream of life till I  
Forget the waking dream of death.

The low moon in her maiden charms  
Bends o'er the forest brown and still,  
To clasp within her snowy arms  
Endymion dreaming on the hill.

I rest me here in thy soft noon  
Of stars; I sleep, the amorous rose  
And lily lull me in repose;—  
I shall awake too soon, too soon.

One fleecy cloudlet floating high,  
Gleams in the azure firmament  
Where some lone Arab of the sky  
Lies dreaming in his windy tent.

Here in the sultry tide of noon,  
Myself and Arab dozing, too,  
Their veil of ether gleaming through,  
Go floating o'er me star and moon.

O Noon, eternal be; let Him  
That made thee fair his might reveal,  
With magic touching spoke and rim,  
And stay the gliding of thy wheel.

Ah, no? Then say at whose behest  
Thou hast from the blue zenith rolled  
And built with pillars flaming gold  
Thy bright pavilion in the West,

And left still evening in the sky,  
Alone to weep the vanished day,  
And mourn with Dian, sigh for sigh,  
Her great Hyperion, passed away.

The hills are pictured in the stream;  
I watch the giants of the wood,  
Like ghosts, reflected in the flood,  
Pass with the twilight into dream.

Sweet eventide with sighs of love  
And yearning fraught! to unseen shore  
I wing my hopes, each like a dove,  
Through heaven to return no more.

They come no more, but I shall go  
To them, where they have builded high  
My home, a palace in the sky;—  
Sweet Eventide hath told me so.

## XVIII

In seraph's wing and golden-rod,  
Lo, one divine elixir flows;  
Hath angel 'neath the eyes of God  
A seeming fairer than the rose?

My veins do run a redder wine  
For the sweet lyre within the rose;  
And lily's heart a secret knows  
That doth my heart incarnadine.

A brother I, to bird and bee,—  
One language in the house of Pan;  
The stately soul within the tree  
Nods to the soul within the man.

If thou and I immortal be,  
And thou a prophet, speaking oak,  
When each shall pass, a shadow, smoke,  
Where shall I meet thy soul, O tree?

O thought of him that understands,  
That murmuring bendest me above,  
I feel thy soft caressing hands;  
Say, dost thou love me as I love?

Dost whisper me, O calm, serene,  
That just behind yon azure veil  
There standeth God? Mine eyes do fail;  
Believest where thou hast not seen?

And hast thou rightly understood  
Why He that fashioned man and tree,  
Made thee a giant of the wood,  
And me a dwarf to question thee?

Rememberest what time we sate  
By the great world-encircling stream  
And each began a mighty dream  
Of upward-yearning, strong as Fate?



And knowest thou what aeons lie  
Between us and that far-off shore,  
And what hath been since thou and I  
Heard that primeval ocean roar?

Ah, what shall be the strife of soul,  
When once again the ways divide,  
Ere thee and me, once more, the tide  
Of being to one haven roll?

And shall we guess or shall we know,  
The why of being and the how,  
Or bandy question to and fro  
No saner, wiser, then than now?

And when this heart is cold and low,  
All silent in this lone retreat,  
O tell how warm and true it beat  
For thee in ages long ago!

How I did woo thee and desire  
To teach my harp a sweeter tone,  
Till thou didst make thyself a lyre  
And sound thy music with mine own.

Mayhap some far off Eden lies,  
Where I shall be, the cycle run,  
A watcher and a Holy One,  
And thou a Tree of Paradise.

I pledge no faith, I make no vow,  
I cast no foolish horoscope;  
The Lord of Life, he knoweth now,—  
I do not know, I only hope.

## XIX

Then spake the soul within the tree,  
Each leafy bough became a song  
To challenge mine; sweet minstrelsy,  
Mild as a lute, but O how strong!

“Spirit that flittest to and fro,  
Thy tent of darkness in and out,  
That buildest altars unto Doubt,  
Nor sayest once, I know, I know,

“Am I thy brother? Claimest kin?  
And that grim raven for thy soul?  
Open, that I may look within  
And mock thee in thy house of dole.

“Explain thy god that naught explains,  
Bow thee to each wind-shaken reed  
And tremble at the falling creed,—  
Yet the great Lord of Life remains.

“The prophets come, the prophets go,  
And cry each new evangel out,—  
So thou dost waver to and fro  
Upon the changing tides of doubt.

“Now on a shoreless sea, becalmed,  
Most erring when believing most,  
Thou pipest unto spirits lost  
And knowest not that thou art damned.

“Thou seest ever in thy heart  
The shadow of the dread unknown;  
Sweet song hath sealed thy lips, and Art  
Breathes on thee, touching thee to stone.

“Atom that evermore aspires,  
And questions ever how and why,  
Still hoping though the heart deny,  
I know thee as I knew thy sires.

“They laugh, they weep, a little way  
Together,—then, nor smiles nor tears;  
Here in my shadow, mix their clay  
Father and son, a thousand years.

“My sire and I the cycle span;  
Between us twain, the ages rolled  
Have heaped the ashes and the mould,—  
All that is left or known of man.

“I cannot tell what kingdoms lie  
’Twixt that white hand and this green bough;  
Thy word is brother,—then am I  
Immortal as immortal thou.

“The lords of good and evil sit  
Upon the circle of the earth  
And the great doors of Death and Birth  
Swing outward to the Infinite.

“Shinar from out her ruined bower  
Looks forth with mourning in her smile  
To him that late his Babel-Tower  
Hath builded in the Druid’s isle.

“He climbed unto the awful door  
Of Fate and challenged them that keep;  
But now, with Babylon, asleep,  
He waketh not forevermore.

“An ocean rolling without rest,  
An empire waning till it die;—  
Thy mighty Nimrod of the West,  
What hath he told thee more than I?

“Of things that are and things that seem,  
Discernest thou the false, the true?  
Thy soul hath run the cycle through,  
What now the image of thy dream?

“What is the circuit? What the goal?  
And when shall this great wheel, aflame,  
With myriad suns, dissolving roll  
Into the nothing whence it came?

“Go trim thy tiny cockle-shell  
And sail the star-encircled main;  
Go ask the Pleiades again  
And bid the old Arcturus tell

“Where thou shalt be when this great coil  
Unrolls, the universe outworn,  
And, what to thee, or rest or toil  
When Time uncycles night and morn.

“And soul, if soul be greater man,  
Say, would thy Heaven Heaven be  
Without the song-bird and the tree?  
Or hast thou dreamed a fairer plan?

“I ask nor why, nor whence I came,  
Nor who hath wrought me, trunk and limb;  
I do but stand and lift my flame  
Of leaves, an anthem unto Him.

“I touch the curtained doors of Fate,  
No inward fear, no outward zeal;  
What she may hide, or what reveal,  
I do not know, I wait, I wait.”

## XX

A little child I lay in dream,  
There stood a heaven-reaching wall  
Twixt me and the great God, and all  
The lightning of the world did seem

Within the wall. My soul was dust,  
A conscious ether downward blown  
Without a wind,—and hate and lust  
And darkness claimed me for their own.

I saw a star that flaming fell,  
Quenched in the dark and noisome tide;  
I heard a voice that wailing cried,  
“This is Damnation, this is Hell!”

And terror woke me. False or true,  
It was no dream, no wizard’s rod  
That smote me. Child, but well I knew  
That I had touched the Mount of God.

The child was youth, the youth was man;  
Once more that horror from the cave  
Of sleep; I stood beside a grave,  
The long years shrunk to a span.

At eve, beneath the greenwood tree  
Methought there stood a minstrel old,  
And sang of love and poesy,  
Of lady fair and hero bold.

I saw a little globe of light  
Flit hither, thither on the mead;  
They whispered, "Death." I gave no heed,  
The phantom glimmered out of sight.

Once more that sphere of light, as one  
That loiters, came; it smote the tree,  
It withered. "Death, but let him run",  
I said, "He seeks not me, not me".

The little globe, or far or near,  
Did smite and smite,—its aim was true.  
The terror of the grave I knew  
Was sphered within, I felt no fear.

And I did smile to see him pass.  
The trembling lily paled, "and I",  
She whispered, "is it I? Alas!"  
He touched her and I saw her die.

And then he turned. Ah! who shall tell  
The terror? Did mine eyelids close?  
A dart of flame shot from the rose,—  
The world was lightning and I fell

Dissolving into mist and fire,  
Fathomless depths, till a strong hand  
Me stayed; a voice, "Aspire, aspire!"  
One cried and touched me with his wand.

Then a swift wing, ascending, bore  
Me upward from the gates of death,  
And lo, the morn! and the soft breath  
Of Spring, and light, sweet light once more.

## XXI

O thou that dost my heart inspire,  
Late coming, but expected long,  
Draw near; let thy sweet breath touch lyre  
And lips to a diviner song.

The shadow and the voice of dole  
Within rebuke; O wing my prayer  
Up to the Lord of Light and scare  
That dreadful raven from my soul.

One blood, one fire our being hath,  
And twain,—He ransomed twain I wist;  
Thy hand, and that great wall of wrath  
Shall roll asunder like a mist.

And should my trembling soul, set free  
From clay, a moment downward tend,  
Speak thou the Master, he will send  
His mighty angel unto me.

Mine eyes are dim, my locks are gray,  
And I a sweeter wisdom learn;  
I weep no more the wasted day,  
Nor count the loss; late I return

To the high purpose unfulfilled.  
Mark thou anew the height of wall,  
The tale of stone; I heed thy call,—  
Henceforth, O Lord, I build, I build.

## XXII

Faith took my hand, around me shone  
A glory like the dream of youth;  
I stood upon the mount of Truth  
And saw the shadow of a throne.

I saw unfold the perfect plan  
Of that fair world that is to be;  
A mightier than the fabled Pan  
Did pipe his music unto me.

I saw one banner streaming o'er  
One glorious isle, one land of rest,  
And one great river rolling west  
That ceaseth not forevermore.

I scan the cycles of the past,  
I see the beast and creeping thing,  
Each striving upward, till at last  
The voice of anthem and the wing.

Life treads the lonely æons dim,  
Arising, Lórd, to Thee sublime;  
Who erst were dragons of the slime  
Now flame adoring seraphim.

Each sunless cave thy mandate hears;  
The voiceless people of the sea  
Do make a ladder of the years  
And climb through darkness unto Thee.

From age to age, we know not how,  
We grow from children unto men;  
We break the idols of the then  
To build the altars of the now.

From age to age, we somewhat feel  
The changing of the mortal clod;  
From age to age, the golden wheel  
Of life doth circle nearer God.



We grope for truth, and blindly reach,  
Our eyes anointed dimly see  
The glory of the time to be,—  
We cannot voice it into speech.

Yet 'mid the roar and dust and heat  
Of fiery forges purging doubt,  
Ten thousand clanging hammers beat  
The world's great anvil-music out.

Fate spins; Time weaves the shroud of Fate.  
To one fair goal the cycles run,  
Still do the Father and the Son  
Work evermore,—yea, work and wait.

And while we cast the horoscope,  
Pursuing still our destined way,  
Faith lights anew the torch of Hope  
And guides until the perfect day.

### XXIII

Cousin, my baubles at thy feet;  
Flash one the pure ethereal fire  
Of truth, that one to thy desire,  
Select, and wear it till we meet.

Wear it, a token on thy brow,  
A talisman upon thy hand;  
Then I, howe'er exalted thou,  
Shall know thee in the Blessed Land.

### XXIV

And Friend that dost my harping list,  
Fain would I speak thee, soul to soul,  
Once more ere dim oblivion roll  
O'er us and hide us in the mist.

But now my plaint hath vexed thee long;  
I am aweary of the strife  
And thou art weary of the song.  
Farewell,—this is my Psalm of Life.





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